

## An Ocean Acquaintance

By Claude Parnass

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The great steamer plowed its way onward, each throb of the engines bringing her nearer to the destined haven. Far up in the bow stood a man and a woman watching through the darkness. Plymouth would be reached early next morning. In silence the two stood gazing at the distant lights now beginning to flash out. This meant the close of the voyage, the end of a week of rare companionship.

At first the man had paid but scant heed to the slender, dark-eyed woman who faced him at the long table. He was off for a rest and did not care to meet people. But something in the quiet, restrained glance attracted him, and later, when he saw her on deck struggling with steamer rugs, it seemed only civil to offer her assistance.

Henceforth they fell into the way of being together. They read and criticized each other's books and magazines, they spent much time peering the deck, and now had come the last night of it all. She was leaving the ship at Plymouth; he was going on to Cherbourg. The man was the first to speak.

"And am I never to see you again?" he asked.

"You mean—?" she asked.

"I mean that it is best not," was the quiet answer, but he met rebelliously closer.

"Listen," he said determinedly. "I know that it is far too soon to speak, that you have known me barely a week, yet when you talk in this way—say that we shall not meet again!"

"You know nothing of me either," broke in the woman hurriedly—"who I am or whence I come."

"I know you are the loveliest and sweetest woman in the world," he said, with a stubborn frown, "and that I—"

"No, no," cried she sharply. Then she lifted her head. "I have not told you the whole truth," she said, a quiet dignity in her bearing. "I am indeed Mrs. Raymond, and my husband is dead, but—I am also Russell Bancroft's sister."

"Bancroft's—sister." He repeated the words incredulously. "Bancroft's sister." His voice betrayed an amazed bewilderment, but the woman, sensitively alive to every intonation, heard or fancied a certain hidden repugnance beneath the surprise. Her breath fluttered; then she pulled herself together.

"So I am sure you will agree with me that any further friendship between us is impossible," she said clearly. "Good night and goodbye."

Before he could divine her intention she had stepped toward the companionway. The next moment she was gone. The man turned back to the rail.

"Bancroft's sister," he said again, his eyes resting vaguely, unseeing upon the tumbling waters. "Bancroft's sister."

Below in the narrow little cabin Mrs. Raymond threw herself upon the bunk. The heavy tears hung upon her lashes. He hated her then. She wondered at it in a dull sort of way. Yet who really could wonder that the very name of Bancroft should be distasteful in his ears? She knew the whole wretched story. The two men had been chums at school, roommates at college. She recollected the tall lad whom Russell had brought home for an occasional visit. Then had come Cortwright's engagement. The cards were out, the wedding dress finished. Bancroft was to be best man. And then two days before the day set Bancroft, the trusted, the beloved friend, had fled, with his chum's bride, leaving a wild, incoherent note in which they pleaded their unconquerable affection.

Child as she had been, Mrs. Raymond well remembered the tremendous excitement it had stirred, her passionate sympathy for the half-stunned Cortwright. But the affair slid into history, like everything else. After that Russell and his wife lived abroad. She herself had grown up, married and become a widow. Her marriage had not proved exactly a success, yet she had mourned her husband deeply and sincerely, never considering the possibility of her marrying again. Then had come this steamer acquaintance with a man singularly congenial in tastes and ideas. Her learning of his identity had been a shock. She felt that in honesty she must reveal herself. Yet every day she let pass made the task more difficult. And now what she had most feared had come to pass—she had shrunk from the sister of his faithless friend.

The woman on the bunk started up in sudden fierceness. It was not fair. What part had she in that old deed? She must see him again—explain. She did not know exactly what to say, but the impulse carried her out into the corridor. It was not late. Perhaps he would join her again on deck.

But as she turned into the passageway which led to his door and lifted her hand to knock a swift realization came that she was about to do swept over her with an intolerable rush of shame. What! Appeal to the pity of any man? For had he truly loved her he would not have let her go.

Dominated by this reasoning, she turned and fairly ran back to her cabin. There, with bowed head, motionless save for soft, catching breaths, she waited until the steward came to call her.

It looked very cheerless in the big room. A few persons were clustered about one end of a long table. She cast a quick glance about, hardly know-

ing for what she hoped, but he was not there. The steward brought eggs and coffee, and she managed a cup. Then she went on deck.

The rain was dripping dismally. Here and there a light glimmered faintly through the thick mist. So that was Plymouth. The gang plank leading to the tender was steep and slippery. People moved through the dusk like disembodied spirits. It was all very gloomy and very forlorn, and despite herself she shivered.

The gang plank was pulled in. The band, huddled into a damp group on the steamer's deck, broke forth with a lively air. A man, standing near by, laughed.

"If one has to be awake at such an hour it is a comfort to know that no one else can sleep either," he observed grimly.

"It would be hard to sleep through that racket," assented his companion. At the voice she started violently. Was it—could it be—Cortwright? For a moment she scarcely breathed, thrilled between ecstasy and fear. Then a dark figure detached itself from the fog and came to her.

"It is you," said the voice, and this time unmistakably it was Cortwright's. "I wasn't sure at first."

"But you?" gasped the woman. "Your ship—Cherbourg?"

"Hang Cherbourg!" said he cheerfully. Then his voice dropped.

"Do you think that you were very kind to me awhile back?" he asked gravely. "Wasn't it rather mean to spring a surprise of that sort on a man and then run before he could recover?"

"Oh!" expostulated she weakly. This was a new view of the matter. "I thought it was because you didn't care," he went on. "You know, you wouldn't wait, wouldn't give me a chance to speak. I thought—perhaps—anyway, I felt mighty blue when I went below. Then I found this. She could just glimpse the tiny square of lawn that he showed her. "It lay on the carpet near my door, and it told me—it told me—Ah, sweetheart," he cried, a sudden subdued exultation ringing through his tone, "that gave me the courage to come. It told me that perhaps you felt sorry for me; that perhaps you, too, cared—just a little bit—that you might listen to me. Was I wrong, dear? Will you marry me?"

The mist was drifting out to sea. The clouds had broken, and in the east appeared a glow of crimson and gold. The sun was rising in all its splendor and majesty. The rain was over. For a moment the woman gazed with wide, glad eyes at the newborn day; then she turned to meet the man's eager entreaty.

"I will marry you whenever you like," she said.

Not a Tragedy.

They had walked halfway through the park, and suddenly she sat down on a bench. He sat beside her. They were entirely alone save for an old man at one end of their seat immersed in a book. Their agitated conversation continued.

"Oh, it is too dreadful!" she shuddered as she covered her face with her hands as if to shut out some unbearable sight.

"Fearful," he agreed, deeply moved and mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"Horrible," she added. "I cannot bear to think of it. The loss of hope, happiness, perhaps even life itself."

"Hush!" he interrupted gently. "Let us no longer think of it or it may grow to prey on our minds."

"Pardon me," said the old man on the end of the seat, his watery eyes distended in lively apprehension, "has there been some awful disaster? Have you been forced to look upon some awful tragedy?"

The young people regarded each other in some confusion. Hesitatingly the youth answered:

"No, sir. You see, we have just become engaged, and we were talking of what a calamity it would have been had we never met."

Derivation of Fad.

The derivation of the word "fad" is possibly traceable in the Welsh language. By the law of mutation of initial consonants peculiar to that tongue the root words *fadd* and *medd* are convertible terms. Their essential meaning is possession; transitive or intransitive, possession of something or the act of being possessed or engrossed by some occupation or vice. Welsh *medd* and Irish *Sanskrit* and English *mad* have similar meanings and are probably kindred words. The word *mad* is not common in Teutonic idioms, so that the Anglo-Saxon probably borrowed it from the Welsh. *Fad* is therefore equally derivable from *fadd*. Proximally, of course, it comes from the midland dialects and ultimately from some root word common to many members of the Aryan family of speech. It would be strange if the two words, *mad* and *fad*, having a similar meaning, should be traceable to the same root.—Notes and Queries.

The Shrike, or Butcher Bird.

There is a strange little bird, about as big as a robin, which nearly every winter brings us. He is generally alone, like a tiny black and gray hawk in many of his ways, but related truly to the gentle vireos and waxwings. He is the northern shrike, or butcher bird, and he gets a cruel living by catching mice and little birds, which he hangs on locust thorns, sharp twigs or the points of a wire fence, as his little feet, unlike the hawk's, are not strong enough to hold his prey. But he is a handsome fellow, and rarely one may hear a very sweet little song as he sits on the top of some leafless bush, particularly late in the winter. But generally he is silent, like the true birds of prey, or at best gives only a rapping squeal.—St. Nicholas.

## Trust to Nature.

A great many Americans, both men and women, are thin, pale and nervous with poor circulation, because they have ill-treated their stomachs by hasty eating or too much eating, by consuming alcoholic beverages, or by too close confinement to home, office or factory, and in consequence the stomach must be treated in a natural way before they can rectify their earlier mistakes. The muscles in many such people, in fact in every weary, thin and thin-blooded person, do their work with great difficulty. As a result fatigue comes early, is extreme and lasts long. The demand for nutritive aid is ahead of the supply. To insure perfect health every tissue, bone, nerve and muscle should take from the blood certain materials and return to it certain others. It is necessary to prepare the stomach for the work of taking up from the food what is necessary to make good, rich, red blood. We must go to Nature for the remedy. There were certain roots known to the Indians of this country before the advent of the whites which later came to the knowledge of the settlers and which are now growing rapidly in professional favor for the cure of obstinate stomach and liver troubles. These are found to be safe and yet certain in their effect upon the system. The medicinal principles residing in these native roots when extracted with glycerine as a solvent make the most reliable and efficient stomach tonic and liver invigorator, when combined in just the right proportions, as in Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. Where there is bankruptcy of vitality—such as nervous exhaustion, bad nutrition—and thin blood, the body acquires vigor and the nervous blood and all the tissues feel the favorable effect of this sovereign remedy.

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